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TORRINGTON  
RURAL DISTRICT  
1955.

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REPORTS  
OF THE  
**MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH  
AND SANITARY SURVEYOR**

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FOR THE YEAR ENDING  
31ST DECEMBER, 1955.

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GREAT TORRINGTON :

Printed by COPP & SON, "Osborne Printing Works,"  
4, Well Street.

# STAFF.

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## PART TIME OFFICER:

Medical Officer of Health—

DR. E. H. WALKER, M.B., B.S., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.

## WHOLE TIME OFFICER:

Sanitary Inspector and Surveyor—

F. G. GANE, M.R.S.H., M.S.I.A.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT,  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS,  
TORRINGTON.

*To the Chairman and Members of the Torrington  
Rural District Council.*

GENTLEMEN,

We have pleasure in presenting our ANNUAL REPORTS  
for the year ended 31st December, 1955.

We are, Gentlemen,

Yours faithfully,

**E. H. WALKER, M.B., B.S., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.,**

Medical Officer of Health.

**F. G. GANE, M.R.S.H., M.S.I.A.,**

Sanitary Inspector and Surveyor.

# Torrington Rural District.

❖ 1955 ❖

## General Statistics.

Area (Acres) ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	79,803
Population (R.G.)	...	...	...	...	...	...	7,392
Number of Inhabited Houses			...	...	...	...	2,360
Rateable Value	...	...	...	...	...	...	£22,667
Sum realised by a Penny Rate			...	...	...	£92	12s. 10d.

## Extracts from Vital Statistics of the Year.

Live Births ... .. Male 23, Female 18, Total 41.

Decrease of 15 on previous year.

Birth rate per 1000 of estimated Population ... 5'6.

Deaths ... .. Male 39, Female 55, Total 94.

Death Rate per 1,000 of estimated Resident Population 12'7.

# Annual Report of Medical Officer of Health.

## General Sanitary Conditions of the District.

### Nursing.

The District is provided with midwives and nurses under the National Health Scheme.

### Hospitals.

The District is accommodated by the hospitals at Torrington, Bideford, Barnstaple and Exeter which are administered by a local Regional Board. These are not nearly large enough for modern conditions.

## **Clinics.**

These work efficiently through the County Council and other authorities.

## **Isolation Hospitals.**

The majority of our patients are received by the Bideford Isolation Hospital. Special facilities are made for smallpox, etc.

Tuberculosis is admirably looked after by the Barnstaple Clinic.

## **Ambulance Services.**

These are very efficiently worked.

## **Laboratory Services.**

These are available and function well, mostly at Exeter.

## **Maternity Services.**

These are provided by Midwives and Hospitals. Baby clinics are very popular. I suggest that normal cases should be encouraged to use the Home Service available as a larger grant is now made for such cases.

## **Schools.**

Sanitation and water are still not up to standard but are improving at some schools.

T.T. milk is supplied where possible, otherwise Pasteurised or tablets may be issued.

## **Dairies and Cowsheds.**

These are definitely improving. A very few cases of mastitis among cattle have been reported.

## **Venereal Disease.**

There is very little, and what there is, is imported from greater wage earning centres. There is an excellent clinic at Barnstaple.

## **Infestation.**

This is very small amongst locals and the school nurses stop it quickly.



## Housing.

There are many houses not up to standard. It is hoped that persons in "decaying houses" shall be put into Council houses. Those dilapidated houses could then be reconditioned before being allowed to be "tenanted" again. Repairs of older houses is a major problem. Possibly more smaller Council houses should be built for the old persons and smaller families. They should be built where main water is or will be shortly available and preferably in villages rather than remote spots.

## Mental Health and Deficiencies.

The County looks after this very conscientiously, and also the deaf mutes and blind.

## Water.

The improvement in supply is increasing. Some villages have got main water and others will as soon as possible.

## Drainage.

This is rather inadequate as a whole, but villages are being provided with main drainage as funds allow.

## Immunisation against Diphtheria, etc.

The results are very satisfactory. Immunisation must be kept up to date. Immunisation against whooping cough and polio-myelitis will be available to some soon. The value of smallpox vaccination is not fully appreciated.

## Infectious Diseases.

During the year the following were reported :—

Whooping Cough	15 cases.	Tuberculosis	3 cases.
Scarlet Fever	1 „	Measles	7 „
Pneumonia	15 „	Dysentery	1 „
Erysepelas	1 „	Diphtheria	0 „
Smallpox	0 „	Polio-myelitis	0 „

# Annual Report of Sanitary Inspector.

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## DETAILS OF INSPECTIONS.

Dwellings inspected under Housing Acts	...	...	...	57
Dwellings inspected under Public Health Acts	...	...	...	23
Re-inspections under Housing Acts	...	...	...	30
Re-inspections under Public Health Acts	...	...	...	27
Keeping of Animals	...	...	...	2
Offensive accumulations	...	..	...	2
Inquiries into cases of Infectious Disease	...	...	...	1
Number of rooms disinfected	...	...	...	1
Visits to Factories	...	...	...	13
„ „ Bakehouses	...	...	...	5
„ „ Schools	...	...	...	4
Food Inspections	...	...	...	117
Visits to Food Preparing Premises	...	...	...	17
Number of Water Samples	...	...	...	6
Building Inspections under Bye-laws	...	...	...	223
Visits to Council Housing Sites	...	...	...	87
Defective drains	...	...	...	31
Drains tested	...	...	...	57
Plans investigated	...	...	...	89
Petroleum inspections	..	...	...	8
Dirty houses	...	...	...	1
Farm Water Supplies	...	...	...	5
Miscellaneous	...	...	...	39

# **FACTORIES ACT, 1937 and 1948.**

1—INSPECTIONS for purposes of provisions as to health (including inspections made by Sanitary Inspectors)

Premises (1)	M/c line No. (2)	Number on Register (3)	Number of			M/c line No. (7)
			Inspections (4)	Written notices (5)	Occupiers prosecuted (6)	
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities ...	1	53	18	—	—	1
(ii) Factories not included in (i) to which Section 7 applies						
(a) Subject to the Local Authorities (Transfer of Enforcement Order, 1938†) ... ..	2	—	—	—	—	2
(b) Others ... ..	3	—	—	—	—	3
(iii) Other premises under the Act‡ (excluding outworkers' premises) ... ..	4	—	—	—	—	4
TOTAL ... ..		53	18	NIL	NIL	

## 2—CASES IN WHICH DEFECTS WERE FOUND

Particulars	M/c line No.	Number of cases in which defects were found				Number of cases in which prosecutions were	M/c line No.
		Found	Remedied	To H.M. Inspector	Referred By H.M. Inspector		





## HOUSING.

### 1. Inspection of Dwelling-houses during the year :

(1) (a) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects	...	...	...	80
(2) Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	...	...	...	30
(3) Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	...	...	...	32

### 2. Remedy of Defects during the year without service of formal Notices :—

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action	...	...	15
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### 3. Action under Statutory Powers during the year :

#### A. Proceedings under Public Health Acts :—

Number of dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the local Authority	...	...	...	...	5
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### Improvements carried out and nuisances abated :—

<i>External</i>						<i>No. of Premises.</i>
Walls repaired ..	...	...	...	...	...	27
Roofs repaired...	...	...	...	..	...	15
Guttering repaired	...	...	...	...	...	9
Downspouts repaired	...	...	...	...	...	9
Chimneys repaired	...	...	...	...	...	7
Water supply laid on into houses	...	...	...	...	...	37
New pumps provided	...	...	...	...	...	1
Wells Cleansed	...	...	...	...	...	2
Well steinings repaired	...	...	...	...	...	2
New lengths drain laid...	...	...	...	...	...	38
Defective drains repaired	..	..	...	..	...	21
New inspection chambers	...	...	...	...	...	19
Septic tanks repaired	...	...	...	...	...	1
New septic tanks	..	...	..	...	...	17
New gullies	...	...	..	...	...	12
New W.C.'s	...	...	...	...	...	26
Water supply laid on to W.C.'s	...	...	...	...	...	22
W.C. cisterns renewed...	...	...	...	...	...	4
New washing accommodation	...	...	...	...	...	6
Outbuildings repaired	...	...	...	...	...	2

<i>Internal</i>						<i>No. of Premises.</i>
Walls replastered	...	...	...	...	...	28
Ceilings replastered	...	...	...	...	...	27
Windows repaired	...	...	...	...	...	18
Doors repaired	...	...	...	...	...	12
Floors repaired	...	...	...	...	...	13
Cooking appliances repaired or renewed	...	...	...	...	...	15
New sinks	...	...	...	...	...	12
New sculleries	...	..	...	...	...	2
Baths installed...	...	...	...	...	...	15
Food storage improved	...	...	...	...	...	11
Stairs repaired ..	...	..	...	...	...	5
Hot water systems fixed	...	...	...	...	...	15

### **New Housing Accommodation.**

Number of new houses erected by local authority	...	10
„ „ new houses erected by private enterprise	...	5

## **COUNCIL HOUSING PROGRAMME.**

10 houses were completed during the year and at the end of the period under review 8 were under construction. Due to the reduced rates of subsidy and higher interest on loans the Council has decided not to build any houses during 1956. The demand for houses has fallen off, due, it is believed, to the inability of the average rural worker to pay the rather high rents and not to the fact that the general housing needs of the district have been satisfied.

## **IMPROVEMENT GRANTS.**

Many visits have been made to properties during the year to advise owners on the eligibility of their houses for grants. There has been a good demand for these grants and the Council decided to limit the money allocated annually for this purpose to meet loan repayments to the product of a penny rate.

21 grants were approved during the year.

## **REFUSE DISPOSAL.**

A monthly refuse collection of the district is carried out by contract and is disposed of at three refuse tips situated at Winkleigh, Merton and Roborough.

## SEWAGE DISPOSAL.

The Council now has modern disposal plants for the villages of Winkleigh, Sheepwash, Shebbear and Taddipport. Ministry approval is still awaited for new works to serve the villages of St. Giles-in-the-Wood, Kingscott and Roborough. Preliminary Surveys have been carried out by the Consulting Engineers for schemes for Petrockstowe and Merton. The greater part of the district is still without an adequate sewerage and sewage disposal system and it is hoped that approval of outstanding schemes will not be unduly delayed so that steady progress can be maintained and modernisation of the entire district achieved within a reasonable time.

## WATER SUPPLIES.

The North Devon Water Board carried out mains extensions during the year from Merton to Dolton and Beaford, and from Little Torrington via Water Gate to Frithelstock. The number of new connections made during the year were:—

266 — Domestic.

86 — Trade.

The total number of premises now connected to the mains is 660 Domestic premises and 211 trade.

The summer was exceptionally dry and many shallow wells dried up. Water had to be transported to several Council housing sites not served by the mains.

## RODENT DESTRUCTION.

In conjunction with Torrington Borough Council the Council employs a full time Operator.

The following work in the Torrington Rural District was carried out during the year:—

Number of Survey calls made	...	...	...	3187
Number of private premises treated	...	...	...	259
Number of business premises treated	...	...	...	19

## OFFENSIVE TRADES.

There are no offensive trades in this district.

## INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

### Slaughtering.

There are two licensed slaughterhouses in the District at Dolton and High Bickington and slaughtering is regularly carried out. The majority of the animals killed were inspected. The following tables, prepared by the Ministry of Health, show details of these inspections.



TABLE A.

Carcases and Offal inspected and condemned in whole or in part.

	Cattle excluding Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs	Horses
Number killed (if known)	107	2	—	267	195	—
Number inspected ...	105	2	—	258	190	—
<b>All Diseases except Tuberculosis and Cysticerci</b>						
Whole Carcases con- demned ...	—	—	—	1	—	—
Carcases of which some part or organ was con- demned ...	31	—	—	25	—	—
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than Tub- erculosis and Cysticerci	29.5	—	—	10	—	—
<b>Tuberculosis only</b>						
Whole Carcases con- demned ...	1	1	—	—	—	—
Carcases of which some part or organ was con- demned ...	4	—	—	—	6	—
Percentage of the number inspected affected with Tuberculosis ...	4.7	50	—	—	3.1	—
<b>Cysticercosis</b>						
Carcases of which some part or organ was con- demned ...	—	—	—	—	—	—
Carcases submitted to treatment by refriger- ation ...	—	—	—	—	—	—
Generalised and totally condemned ...	—	—	—	—	—	—



TABLE B.

Summary of Meat condemnations with cause and weight.

Food Condemned	Cause	Weight in lbs.
1 Heifer ... ..	Tuberculosis	633
1 Cow ... ..	Tuberculosis	651
2 Beasts' Heads ... ..	Tuberculosis	56
3 Beasts' Lungs ... ..	Tuberculosis	24
2 Beasts' Livers ... ..	Tuberculosis	27
6 Pigs' Heads ... ..	Tuberculosis	108
2 Beasts' Livers ... ..	Distomatosis	28
Parts of 24 Beasts' Livers ... ..	Distomatosis	106
17 Sheep's Livers ... ..	Distomatosis	28
Parts of 3 Sheep's Livers ... ..	Distomatosis	4
1 Beast's Liver ... ..	Cirrhosis	12
Parts of 3 Beasts' Livers ... ..	Cirrhosis	14
2 Sheep's Livers ... ..	Cirrhosis	4
1 Ewe ... ..	Septicæmia	50
1 Ewe's Liver ... ..	Fatty Infiltration	2
1 Lamb's Liver ... ..	Cysts	1
1 Lamb's Liver ... ..	Abscess	1
Parts of Beast's Liver ... ..	Abscesses	3
Total Weight ... ..		1,752 lbs.

TABLE C.

Other Foodstuffs.

Food Condemned	Cause	Weight in lbs.
5 Tins Baked Beans ... ..	Blown	12
51 Tins Corned Beef Loaf ... ..	Decomposition	51
1 Tin Marmalade ... ..	Decomposition	8
1 Tin Luncheon Meat ... ..	Decomposition	4
Total Weight ... ..		75 lbs.

## BUTCHERS' SHOPS.

The five Butchers' Shops in the district are kept in a satisfactory condition.

## **FOOD SHOPS.**

Conditions in the 59 food premises in the district are satisfactory.

## **REGISTERED FOOD PREPARATION PREMISES.**

No ice-cream is manufactured in the district. 15 licences to sell ice-cream have been issued. In each case factory pre-packed ice-cream is sold.

## **MILK AND DAIRIES ACTS AND ORDERS.**

There are no designated milk bottling establishments in the district. Milk sampling is carried out by the Ministry of Agriculture.

## **PETROLEUM LICENCES.**

26 petroleum storage licences were issued during the year.

## **SLAUGHTERING LICENCES.**

15 licences were issued during the year.

## **PLANS.**

89 plans were submitted during the year, 86 were approved and 3 disapproved.

All plans are considered by the Council's Planning Committee before submission to the Divisional Planning Committee.

I attended monthly meetings of the Divisional Planning Committee of the Devon County Council at Barnstaple and one meeting of the Development Committee at Exeter.



